

Ser. No. 10/612,283  
Amdt. dated July 2, 2007  
Reply to Office action mailed January 31, 2007

Atty Docket#:J103UB02US00

Amendments to the Claims/Listing of the Claims

1. (currently amended) A method operable on a computer for automatically selecting and packaging items for mailing, comprising the steps of:  
storing item characteristics for a plurality of items;  
storing postal costs for packages based on package characteristics;  
receiving a customer order specifying a plurality of items for shipping a shipment, the shipment comprising at least one package; by mail retrieving a selected characteristic for each of the plurality of items;  
storing a list comprising identifiers corresponding to specified items;  
automatically determining a number of packages comprising the shipment and determining which items of the customer order will be contained in each package; determining,  
the determining step carried out based on the selected the identifiers, the stored item characteristics corresponding to the identifiers and the postal costs for packages,  
characteristic, if a single package containing the plurality of items will exceed a desired postal rate;  
if the single package will not exceed the desired postal rate,  
packaging the plurality of items in a single package;  
if the single package will exceed the desired postal rate, dividing, based on the selected characteristic, the customer order into multiple sub-orders, each sub-order including a subset of the plurality of items selected so that the sub-order will be at the desired postal rate,  
printing a mailer including a control indicia on the mailer;  
automatically selecting, based on the control indicia, items for inclusion in each sub-order, and packaging each of the sub-orders individually so that the customer order comprises multiple packages;  
and mailing the single or multiple packages to the customer.
2. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the customer order is received by mail on a pre-printed form.

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3. A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the selected said stored item characteristics characteristic is include at least one of chosen from the group comprising: item weight, item thickness and item size.
4. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the further including a step of packaging each of the sub-orders comprises the steps of:  
printing a respective mailers, each mailer for each corresponding to a package for the shipment, each mailer defining customer selected items to comprise the corresponding package; sub-order;  
placing each mailer on an assembly line; and  
placing each customer selected item comprising item in each sub-order package on the associated corresponding mailer as the mailer traverses the assembly line.
5. (original) A method in accordance with claim 4 wherein: each mailer comprises a printed paper mailer; each paper mailer includes, on a first side, a bar code indicative of the items to be packaged with the mailer and on a second side a customer address.
6. (original) A method in accordance with claim 5 wherein the assembly line comprises: a scanner for reading the bar code on each mailer; a plurality of hoppers, each hopper containing a plurality of like items; and a mechanism responsive to computer control for moving an item from a hopper onto a mailer.
7. (original) A method in accordance with claim 6 and further including a customer message on the front of a mailer readable by a customer and indicating that a customer order has been fulfilled in multiple packages.
8. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 7 further comprising a wherein the step of packaging each of the sub-orders includes

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shrink-wrapping each of the sub-orders in packages in a plastic wrap so that the customer address and customer message are readable through the plastic wrap.

9. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 4 4 wherein the step of receiving a customer order is performed at a location geographically remote from the step of packaging each of the sub-orders placing each mailer on an assembly line.

10. (currently amended) A system for selecting and packaging items for mailing, comprising:

a processor;

a memory connected to the processor, the memory storing data and instructions for controlling the operation of the processor; the processor operative to perform the steps of

storing item characteristics for a plurality of items;

storing postal costs for packages based on package characteristics;

receiving a customer order specifying a plurality of items for shipping a shipment, the shipment comprising at least one package; by mail

retrieving a selected characteristic for each of the plurality of items;

storing a list comprising identifiers corresponding to items to comprise the shipment;

automatically determining a number of packages comprising the shipment and determining which items of the customer order will be contained in each package; determining,

the determining step carried out based on the selected the identifiers, the stored item characteristics corresponding to the identifiers and the postal costs for packages.

characteristic, if a single package containing the plurality of items will exceed a desired postal rate;

if the single package will not exceed the desired postal rate, packaging the plurality of items in a single package;

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~~if the single package will exceed the desired postal rate, dividing, based on the selected characteristic, the customer order into multiple sub-orders, each sub-order including a subset of the plurality of items selected so that the sub-order will be at the desired postal rate;~~  
~~printing a mailer including a control indicia on the mailer;~~  
~~automatically selecting, based on the control indicia, items for inclusion in each sub-order, and packaging each of the sub-orders individually so that the customer order comprises multiple packages;~~  
~~and mailing the single or multiple packages to the customer.~~

11. (original) A system in accordance with claim 10 wherein the customer order is received by mail on a pre-printed form.

12. (original) A system in accordance with claim 10 wherein the selected characteristic is chosen from the group comprising: item weight, item thickness and item size.

13. (original) A system in accordance with claim 10 further including an assembly line and wherein the step of packaging each of the sub-orders comprises the steps of: printing a mailer for each sub-order; placing each mailer on the assembly line; and placing each item in each sub-order on the associated mailer as the mailer traverses the assembly line.

14. (original) A system in accordance with claim 13 wherein: each mailer comprises a printed paper mailer; each paper mailer includes, on a first side, a bar code indicative of the items to be packaged with the mailer and on a second side a customer address.

15. (original) A system in accordance with claim 14 wherein the assembly line comprises: a scanner for reading the bar code on each mailer; a plurality of hoppers, each hopper containing a plurality of like items; and a mechanism responsive to computer control for moving an item from a

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hopper onto a mailer.

16. (original) A system in accordance with claim 15 and further including a customer message on the front of a mailer readable by a customer and indicating that a customer order has been fulfilled in multiple packages.

17. (original) A system in accordance with claim 16 wherein the step of packaging each of the sub-orders includes shrink-wrapping each of the sub-orders in a plastic wrap so that the customer address and customer message are readable through the plastic wrap.

18. (original) A system in accordance with claim 10 wherein the step of receiving a customer order is performed at a location geographically remote from the step of packaging each of the sub-orders.

19-22 (canceled)